

Madame Speaker, I am proud to rise today to discuss a serious issue that affects all children: unintentional drowning.

This summer millions of children took to the water as the weather warmed and pools opened all over the United States, but not all children receive the proper, life saving education that can play a critical role in drowning prevention. Minority children, more often than other children, do not participate in swimming lessons or do not have access to swimming lessons.

Roughly 3,500 people fatally drown each year in the United States – that is about 10 people a day - and more than 25 percent of these victims are children 14 and under. In fact, drowning is the second most common cause of accidental death among children. Alarming, fatal drowning rates are 2 to 3 times higher among minority children. According to a study by the University of Memphis, almost 60 percent of African-American and Latino children do not know how to swim as compared to roughly 30 percent of nonminority children. These statistics are not just shocking; they are shameful.

In order to help spread awareness about these startling statistics and how we can better protect our children, Representative Wasserman Schultz and I introduced H.Res. 57, a resolution recognizing the persistently high rates of drowning fatalities among children. The resolution expresses the danger of fatal unintentional drowning in the United States, and condemns the high rates of fatal drowning among all children.

This resolution also celebrates the hard work of initiatives that currently provide swimming lessons to underprivileged communities as well as other efforts that help educate children, parents and caregivers about drowning prevention.

The ability to swim is an important and essential skill, and according to Safe Kids USA, in order to help prevent drowning, children should be enrolled in swimming lessons as early as age 4 to learn how to float, tread water, and enter and exit the pool.

The USA Swimming's Make A Splash Program has partnered with organizations in 31 states and has reached out to over 90,000 children to provide access to swimming education.

Together with these organizations, we must promote access to the type of education that can not only improve children's health, but help save their lives. I urge my colleague to help bring awareness to this serious issue, and support final passage of H.Res. 57.